

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Street Lawyer novel is a legal thriller genre novel written by an American author John Grisham. It was Grisham's ninth novel. The novel was released in the United States on 1 January 1998, published by Bantam Books, and on 30 March 1998 in the UK, published by Century. It has 271 pages and 39 chapters.

The Street Lawyer was written by John Grisham. He is the fastest selling novelist in American history of the 90's. He was born on 8, 1955 in Janesboro, Arkansas. He was study in Mississippi State University. Grisham as a child dreamed of being a professional baseball player. However, after graduating from law school at Olemiss in 1981, he went on to practice law for nearly a decade, specializing in criminal defense and personal injury litigation. In 1983, he was elected to the state House of Representatives and served until 1990. Although his first novel, published in 1988, was not very successful, his second book became a bestseller and was turned into a movie. He has written a lot of novel. *The Street Lawyer* is one of Grisham's bestseller with 5 million copies was on the New York Times bestseller. As the bestselling author, John Grisham also writes other seller novels such as: *The Firm*, *A Painted House*, *The King of Torts*, *Bleachers*, *The Last Juror*,

The pelican grief, Summons, A Time to Kill, the Rainmaker, The Partner, etc.

Almost all of his novels are best-seller novel.

The Street Lawyer tells the story about the lawyer named Michael Brock, who worked in Drake & Sweeney, one of the biggest law firms in Washington D.C. For five years, Michael has been working six days a week and is on the right track to becoming a partner at the big firm. One day, a homeless man came into his office. He is poor and looks different from Michael. He threatens Michael and his eight colleagues with a gun and sticks of dynamite. Finally, the policeman shoots him. Then the homeless man dead.

Michael Brock tries to investigate about the homeless man. The homeless man named De Von Hardy. He has spent years working as a security at the National Arboretum. He is a poor and need sympathy from others. He lived in an apartment. Someday, the apartment will be evicted, so he did not have house to be lived. The real estate company which is helped law firm Drake & Sweeney evicted him with no warning before.

Michael investigation deepens. Michael started helping Mordecai Green, a lawyer who helped the homeless. They talked about Mister and Michael learned that a company called River Oaks, whose lawyers are Drake & Sweeney, owns the apartment where De Von Hardy lived. Mordecai told him the eviction was illegal because Mister was a tenant and not a squatter. He crucially pays the rent every month but the River Oaks still evicted him. Michael soon realizes that his law firm, Drake & Sweeney, had made the old man homeless. For that

reason, Michael was curious and decides to leave his carrier in Drake & Sweeney. He also leaves his wife. He has no sympathy with the way of job in that. Because he wants to do something to helps people. Then he runs a law firm which helps the homeless, and became a lawyer for the homeless, a street lawyer. He steals a file from Drake & Sweeney's which proves that the company evicted De Von Hardy and other tenants. Actually Michael wants to copy it, but on the way he got accident so the file did not returned. He finds out more about the eviction and realized that it was an illegal eviction, Drake & Sweeney, was responsible for wrongful deaths of some homeless people, who had died after being evicted. Mike try to struggle to get back of the homeless right and gives reasonably comfortable life for them.

Michael with the help of Mordecai which representing the evictees filed a law suit to the court against his ex-firm, Drake & Sweeney. The partners of Drake & Sweeney ask to meet with Mordecai to settle on an agreement without a jury, but that was wrong. Michael and Modercai made a negotiation with Drake & Sweeney's partner that they should pay the homeless man and other tenants. If Drake & Sweeney agreed, the casus would be over without the public hearing about it but if they disagreed, Michael and Mordecai would bring in a jury and was confident of winning and humiliating them. Finally, Drake & Sweeney agreed with Modercai's pretension. And also Michael's life is being better, he taking a short vacation with Megan and Ruby.

The Street Lawyer novel is a novel that has many public responses. The public response consists of positive and negative response. The first positive response comes from Ismi. According to her, by reading the novel, she founds one point in this story which is really interesting. She also gets valuable messages from the novel (ahmadnursaeful13.wordpress.com). The second positive response is delivered by Vicente Hidalgo in *helendipity weblog* on February, 16th 2010. He states that the story of novel is easy to understand and the reader can imagine everything as if it was an adventure film. Besides, he also said that the plot is interesting because it tells about crime, violence and injustice. The novel has a full of brilliant descriptions and fluent dialogues.

On the other hand, there is also the negative response. The first negative response comes from Candice in *Goodreads* on December, 04th 2010. According to her *The Street Lawyer* novel is not worth reading novel because it makes the reader boring to read it. She also would not recommend the novel to people that looking for a thriller. She said that “the novel is heartbreaking and disgusting. Michael Brock may have developed a conscience by accident after the incident at his office, but he failed to develop a personality. He was a flat and boring character who babbled and whined incessantly”. The other response also delivered by Brian. According to him *The Street Lawyer* novel has the misled preachiness of the story, it's also rather boring. He state that “in the novel are perfectly normal people who become homeless because they are down on their luck. Strangely, no mention is made of the primary sources of homelessness:

drugs and mental illness. No, according to *The Street Lawyer*, the problem of homelessness is caused by the selfish prosperity of our country".
(www.goodreads.com)

The street lawyer is best-seller novel. According to *Bowker Annual*, the novel sold 2, 550, 000 copies in 1998 at the cost of \$27. 95 a copy. This novel is also translated into many languages such as Spanish, Polish, Chinese, Hebrew, Portuguese, Korean, German, French, Italian, and also Indonesian.

There are some reasons why the researcher chooses *The Street Lawyer* as the object of the research. The first reason is the issue. *The Street Lawyer* novel is a good novel. John Grisham as the author wants to tell the reader that the issues of novel which are suffered by society. There was social injustice of law in the society. It can give the reader more inspiration and think of problem solving. This novel has an education for the reader to upstage the people of all the social class in the same treatment, even they are poor or rich people. So, the story can open mind for some of people in America. They must have a social sensitivity and help each other. It means that they get a moral value from it.

The second is the author. The novel is written by John Grisham, an American lawyer, politician, and author. He is among the most commercially successful authors for legal thrillers. He is an author who responses about sense of humanity. He draws the social condition in the society, such as racial prejudice, corporate corruption, rape and domestic violence in a manner that is not only dramatic but also accessible to the general public. For example, in *The*

Street Lawyer novel, Grisham describes the condition of homelessness in a clear. He explains the different classes that comprise homeless status.

The last is the characters in *The Street Lawyer* novel, John Grisham takes Michael Brock as major character. He is thirty five years old. He works at Drake & Sweeney; one of the biggest law firms in Washington D.C. Michael Brock changes his life totally and leaves his good career at Drake & Sweeney. He starts working as a street lawyer who helps homeless people. Michael and his wife also decide to divorces because she disagrees of Michael's decision that he wants to resign from Drake & Sweeney and becomes a lawyer for the homeless man.

Considering the explanations above, the researcher constructs the title as the research as PROTEST AGAINST INJUSTICE REFLECTED IN JOHN GRISHAM'S *THE STREET LAWYER* NOVEL (1998): A MARXIST CRITICISM.

B. Literature Reviews

Studies on *The Street Lawyer* Novel are done by other researchers. The first researcher was conducted by Azizah (UMS, 2007), entitled "*Social Justice in John Grisham's The Street Lawyer: A Sociological Approach*". Her aim is to describe the structural elements of the novel and to analyze the novel based on sociological perspective. Her research belongs to qualitative research. In her research, she concludes as follows: the social justice in *The Street Lawyer* is

mostly found in the characters drawn by John Grisham who live in the condition of America at that time that was strongly shown by the differences of rich and poor people in America. Poor people included homeless as the underclass always get unjust treatment from the authorities' society. While, rich people or the high class that have power or authority do not give opportunity to homeless to get their standard of living.

The second research was conducted by Miharja (UNIKOM, 2014) entitled "*The Influences of Superstructure and Base toward The Main Character in The Street Lawyer novel*". This research aims to describe the character that analyzed using Marx's analysis about relation of production. It was described using Descriptive method.

The similarities of previous studies with this research are the object. The previous researcher has similarities object when analysis the data. The differences between the researcher and previous researcher are the issue. The researcher's issue emphasize on protest against injustice, while the previous researcher's issue emphasize on social justice. Another difference is the researcher uses the Marxist criticism, while the previous researcher uses sociological approach.

C. Problem Statement

The major problem of the studying is "How is the protest against injustice reflected in John Grisham's *The Street Lawyer* novel?"

Based on the major problem above, the researcher breaks down the research questions, as follow:

1. What is the form of protest against injustice which is contained in *The Street Lawyer* novel?
2. How is the protest against injustice that is done in *The Street Lawyer* novel?

D. Limitation of the Study

This study is limited in analyzing the protest against injustice reflected in John Grisham's *The Street Lawyer* novel viewed from Marxist Criticism.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the novel based on its structural element.
2. To analyze the novel based on the Marxist Criticism.

F. Benefit of The Study

The result of the study is expected to give benefit as follows:

1. Theoretically Benefit

The study is projected to give theoretical contributions and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly in the literary studies.

2. Practically Benefit

The study is expected to enrich the knowledge and experience of the researcher and other students at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other universities that are interested in literary studies.

G. Research Method

There are five points that should be taken into account in this study method, they are: 1) type of the study, 2) object of the study, 3) type of data and data source, 4) technique of data collection, and 5) technique of data analysis. The description of each element will be discussed further into wide explanation bellow:

1. Type of the Study

This study is descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative method is the way of writing research that employs the method of collecting describing, classifying and analyzing the data, then drawing conclusion.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *The Street Lawyer* novel, reflected by John Grisham and it was published on 1998. The researcher use Marxist criticism to analyze the novel.

3. Type of the Data and Data Source

There are two data sources namely primary data source and secondary data source.

a. Primary Data Source

The primary data source is the novel *The Street Lawyer* written by John Grisham.

b. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data sources are taken from some books, websites, and other literary and other matters that support this analysis.

4. Technique of the Data collection

The technique of data collection of study is by collecting and selecting both the primary and the secondary data source. The researcher will involve some required steps:

- a. Reading the novel repeatedly to get deep understanding.
- b. Determining the character that will be analyzed.
- c. Searching and reading some related secondary data source to find out the theory, data, and information required.
- d. Taking notes of important part in both primary data and secondary data sources.
- e. Arranging, researching, and developing the relevant data.
- f. Classifying and determining the relevant data.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The researcher uses the Marxist criticism to analyze the novel and applies it by using the descriptive analysis. The researcher also uses the structural analysis of the work. First, the data are arranged in a list of data. Second, the researcher is looking for selecting the correlation of data by using Marxist criticism. Third, all data from the second step are arranged. And the last, drawing the conclusion.

H. Paper Organization

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter I is introduction, which explains the background of the study, literature reviews, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and paper organization. Chapter II is the underlying theory; it consists of notion of Marxism, major principles of Marxism, and structural element of the novel. Chapter III is the social historical background of America society in the late twentieth century. Chapter IV is structural analysis of *The Street Lawyer* novel. Chapter V is Marxist analysis of the novel. Chapter VI is conclusion and suggestion of the research.